



NEWS



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Mental Health First Aid team to grow next week as 30 instructor candidates are trained in Bloomington

Instructor Certification Training Slated for April 11 – 15 at the McLean County Health Department

Media opportunity: Media representatives are invited to sit-in on the training the afternoon of Wednesday the 13th, or attend the graduation activities on Friday the 15th, at approximately 11:30 a.m. Contact Lisa Slater at (309) 888-5489 to make arrangements.

BLOOMINGTON – The McLean County Health Department and its partners, collectively referred to as the Mental Health First Aid Collaborative, are pleased to announce a Mental Health First Aid instructor certification opportunity made possible by the Central Illinois Area Health Education Center at Illinois State University. Scheduled for April 11 through April 15 at the McLean County Health Department, the training is expected to enhance our capacity to provide Mental Health First Aid Trainings throughout our community.

“The opportunity to host Mental Health First Aid instructor certification training locally, in McLean County, is an accomplishment that was years in the making,” says Laura Beavers, Behavioral Health Division Manager at the McLean County Health Department.

“The Central Illinois Area Health Education Center at Illinois State University included scholarships for 16 Central Illinois instructor candidates that reduced the cost of the training to \$100. Eight of candidates are from McLean County. In challenging economic times, this allows us to expand our training capacity to include, Advocate BroMenn, the Bloomington Fire Department, McLean County Area EMS, Chestnut Health Systems, the McLean County Center for Human Services, Tri County Special Education Association, and the Mclean County Health Department. Having a champion with such a wide cross section of McLean County will assist us in achieving our goal of having at least one resident on every block throughout the county trained in Mental Health First Aid.”

The instructor certification training is being taught by trainers from the National Council for Behavioral Health, managers of the program in the United States and candidates are travelling from seven states to attend the Illinois class. The costs associated with bringing the trainers to McLean County are being covered by the Central Illinois Area Health Education Center. Registration for the train-the-trainer program is limited to 30 participants and the cost to attend is \$1,800.

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The new instructors will join more than 9,000 U.S. instructors already certified by MHFA-USA as instructors in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Instructors come from a variety of backgrounds, including behavioral healthcare, law enforcement and public safety, universities, faith communities, and primary care. For more information about the MHFA Instructor Certification training, contact Maureen Sollars at either (309) 888-5539 or Maureen.Sollars@mcleancountyil.gov.

Mental Health First Aid is an evidence-based, eight-hour training course developed in Australia that is designed to give members of the public key skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. Included on SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence Based Programs and Practices, studies show that training in Mental Health First Aid builds confidence in helping an individual experiencing a mental health challenge, reduces negative or distancing attitudes towards individuals with mental illnesses, and increases mental health literacy – being able to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

Training classes are offered through the collaborative efforts of the McLean County Health Department, McLean County Center for Human Services, Central Illinois Area Health Education Center, Women to Women Giving Circle of Illinois Prairie Community Foundation, Advocate BroMenn Medical Center, OSF St. Joseph Medical Center, and Chestnut Health Services.

Residents wanting to attend a Mental Health First Aid training class can find a complete listing of upcoming classes and registration information on the McLean County Health Department website: <http://health.mcleancountyil.gov>. There are two separate class options – Mental Health First Aid and Youth Mental Health First Aid. All training classes are \$10.00 per participant and a grant from the Women to Women Giving Circle of Illinois Prairie Community Foundation money pays for the cost of the take-home workbook.

If someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, contact the Center for Human Services at 309-827-5351 or call PATH 211.

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